



GREENSBORO URBAN AREA

Transportation Advisory Committee

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of October 31, 2000
10:00 a.m. Greensboro, NC

TAC MEMBERS PRESENT

Sandy Carmany	TAC Chair, City Council
Mayor Keith Holliday	City Council
Chairman Bob Landreth	Board of County Commissioners
Don Vaughan	City Council
Robbie Perkins	City Council

OTHERS PRESENT

Jim Westmoreland	TCC Chair / GDOT	Craig McKinney	GDOT
Scott Walston	NCDOT Statewide Planning	Paul Muschick	News & Record
Scott Rhine	NCDOT Public Transit	Jim Ayres	Town of Pleasant Garden
Tyler Meyer	GDOT	Gwenda Priest	City Attorney's Office
Libby James	GTA	Veronica Dunlap	GDOT
Tom Martin	Greensboro Planning	Judi Decker	Triad Reporting & Typing
Adam Fischer	GDOT		

ACTION ITEMS

Approve Minutes of August 10, 2000

Mr. Vaughan moved approval of the August 10, 2000 meeting minutes as written, seconded by Mr. Landreth. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Adopt Minor MTIP Amendment #1 reviewed on August 10

Mr. Meyer stated MTIP Amendment #1 is ready for adoption following consideration at the August 10 meeting and a 30 day public review period. Two project schedule changes are included. The first involves the Greensboro Western Urban Loop from just north of I-85 to just north of High Point Road. In the current MTIP right-of-way is scheduled to begin in post-year (which would be 2007 or sometime shortly thereafter) to Federal fiscal year 2001 (which started October 1st). While this does not change the construction schedule, it is the first step towards accelerating the entire project, which the draft TIP carries forward. Technically, the next step after TAC adoption would be for the Board of Transportation to authorize the right-of-way acquisition on that project. The Division 7 Right-of-Way Office reports that this has already happened and that the

right-of-way acquisition process has already begun. Nevertheless, it will still be important for the MPO to make this amendment.

Mr. Vaughan moved that the Technical Advisory Committee approve the FY-2005 Minor Amendment #1, seconded by Mr. Holliday. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Meyer added that this item also includes rescheduling Greensboro Transit Authority Routine Capital Items including bus shelters and benches as presented on the sheets distributed for review. Implementation will begin April, 2001.

Adopt Minor MTIP Amendment #2

Mr. Meyer stated that when TAC heard about this at the last meeting it did not look as though an MTIP Amendment would be required. This project covers the replacement of all the pedestrian bicycle/crosswalks/school bus warning signs on the State Highway System with new fluorescent green signs. The intent is to increase motorists' awareness at these locations, thereby improving safety. This amendment is a technicality at this point to properly account for federal safety funds used. This is a Minor Amendment which does not need public review. TCC recommended that this be adopted into the MTIP.

Mr. Vaughan moved that the Technical Advisory Committee approve the FY 2006 Minor Amendment #2, seconded by Mr. Landreth. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

It was reported that NCDOT had a Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Summit in Greensboro on October 24th. The Secretary of Transportation talked about the current initiatives in pedestrian and bicycle safety. This need clearly exists in our community.

Public Involvement Policy Revision

Mr. Meyer stated a Public Involvement Plan is in place that guides the MPOs public involvement activities. There are two parts of this plan, the first concerning long-range transportation plans, and the second concerning the MTIP and other items. The revisions will replace the current provisions for the MTIP.

Periodic updates are required by Federal regulations and provide the opportunity to see if current provisions are effective in providing information to the public, as well as in getting feedback. It is evident that enhancements are needed at this point. The handout provides an executive summary that lists the key updates.

- **Use additional media outlets.** including press releases, the MPO website, and the City's Local Access Cable Channel 13, and others as appropriate.
- **Provide for more effective newspaper advertising.** Replace the 7-days' consecutive advertising in the major papers requirement with more targeted display ads to run in subsequent weeks. This policy will require at least two ads be run in different weeks during the public review process. The ads will be run in the main or local sections rather than as legal ads.
- **Provide more flexibility in the timing of public meetings.** The current policy provides for an optional public meeting at the end of the public review process just prior to MTIP

adoption. The revision will require at least one meeting to be held at the end, the beginning, or any point within that public review process.

- **Distinguish between Major Amendments and Minor Amendments.** The distinction here is that a major amendment generally will involve additional air quality analysis or a major expansion of the Transit fleet. The amendments seen over the last year have generally been Minor Amendments: safety projects, individual Transit items etc. Minor amendment projects are typically not controversial do not require a public review period. The revisions do provide for an optional public review process with minor amendments, however.
- **Take additional steps to inform and involve minority and low income communities.** This has always been a goal of the MPO, but with Federal requirements increasing the emphasis on this, it will be a higher bar to reach. The revision will encourage various methods to reach that sector of the community in an effort to determine effective strategies. The revision specifies that at a minimum targeted mailings will be sent to the mailing list that GTA uses for the same purpose. It has that provision, and it encourages the use of other similar and more innovative strategies.

The action before the Committee today is to consider this item prior to its release for public review. During the public review period it will be advertised and made available to the public. At the next MTIP meeting it will be ready for adoption, following consideration of any comments received.

Approve Revised Memorandum of Understanding

Mr. Meyer stated the Memorandum of Understanding is the agreement between the City of Greensboro, Guilford County, and the State to conduct the ongoing metropolitan planning process. It covers the general activities and products of the MPO. The document hand out includes an approval resolution and the updated draft MOU.

The draft MOU includes an extra voting member to represent the County Commissioners. The TAC Chair now breaks tie votes by having an extra vote to cast in those situations. Representation of the small towns is also resolved. Pleasant Garden had expressed some interest in having a TAC member. In talking through that, it was determined that the second voting County representative would assist in representing them.

Chairwoman Carmany stated there were now six voting members, with two County Commissioners. Under the old plan, there was one County Commissioner and an alternate; now there will be two voting members for the County Commissioners. An alternate may be designated to cover one of the two voting members.

Part of the enhanced communication strategy was having an item on the agenda at every meeting for town updates, providing the towns regular information about the MPO activities, and attempting to encourage a two-way dialogue.

Mr. Landreth moved that the Transportation Advisory Committee approve the Revised Memorandum of Understanding, seconded by Mr. Vaughan. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Meyer advised that the next step would be to send the MOU to City Council and the County Commissioners for the approval of both of those bodies. Approval by the Secretary of Transportation will be the final step.

BUSINESS/ADDITIONAL ACTION ITEMS

Market Street Interchange Update

Mr. Westmoreland stated that discussions on this item have been going on for quite a while. He referred the Committee to the handout containing a history of the interchange placement/removal issue, starting with the EIS record of decision for the Western Urban Loop from in August, 1995 where it was officially declared that a West Market Street interchange was a critical part of the Western Urban Loop project itself.

Possible conflicts associated with the spacing of the interchange were first discussed at a meeting with NCDOT in March, 2000. NCDOT communicated a potential need to remove it due to excessive costs in order to keep this particular segment of the Urban Loop from I-40 up to Bryan Boulevard on its construction schedule with an open to traffic date of 2005.

The TAC was briefed in May 2000 about the problems that had been identified. At that point, this Committee directed the NCDOT to work with GDOT staff to look at (1) different partial interchange options, and (2) mitigation needs in light of area traffic impacts. The following interchanges were anticipated to be impacted: Gallimore Dairy Road at I-40; Friendly Avenue at the Urban Loop; and Guilford College Road at I-40.

A letter from Roy Shelton of FHWA in May 2000 communicated the opinion that the interchange needed to be removed due to inadequate spacing with the I-40 interchange. For all intents and purposes, this told NCDOT to remove the interchange from the project.

NCDOT considered partial interchange options and mitigation needs from April until September, 2000. In September a letter from Debbie Barbour, State Design Engineer, to Chairwoman Carmany presented the results of the traffic analysis and indicated that the only necessary improvement would be an additional lane on each of the on/off ramps at Friendly Avenue.

GDOT staff had concerns about the NCDOT traffic analysis given the fact that current average daily traffic volumes on Market Street are about 30,000 while the analysis put 2025 volumes as low as 15,000 or 16,000 in certain locations. GDOT staff then conducted a separate analysis of likely future conditions based on traffic count information at signalized intersections.

At the meeting with NCDOT on the 18th, GDOT shared their concerns and analyses and provided NCDOT a list of additional mitigation needs. NCDOT was asked to review these items and reply back by the next TAC meeting in December. The five things noted were:

- fund the Gallimore Dairy Road widening from International Drive to Market Street as a priority improvement. The preferred means would be including it under the I-40 widening project
- Develop a new TIP project for Gallimore Dairy Road Extension from Market Street to Friendly Avenue. The MPO feasibility study on Gallimore Dairy Road between International

Drive and Market Street suggested the importance of this connection if the Market Street Interchange were not to be constructed. The extension would require some type of tunnel to miss the runway safety zone. Potential environmental concerns associated with the tank farm, etc., will need to be addressed. The state would be asked to identify funding in the upcoming 2002 TIP to perform a State feasibility study, and for project planning..

- Intersection improvement projects identified through GDOT's mitigation analyses including an additional left turn lane at the Stagecoach Trail and Market Street intersection.
- Improvements at Guilford College Road and Market Street.
- Improvements at Guilford College and Friendly Avenue.

Mr. Westmoreland recommended that TAC adopt a resolution asking NCDOT to review and move forward the five steps identified above.

Doubt was expressed as to whether the proposed mitigation steps would adequately address area traffic problems. Mr. Westmoreland replied that these are short-term mitigation needs intended to serve through 2010. Longer term needs are currently under evaluation through the Airport Area Transportation Study. Improvements under consideration there include routing I-73 down the Western Urban Loop instead of NC 68 to I-40, a Sandy Ridge Road Connection, and a possible Forsyth Airport Connector Highway to parallel I-40 to the north.

Mr. Perkins said that the state is creating a problem by not constructing the previously planned interchange, and that the state should solve it. The needs should be addressed immediately because in ten years there will be gridlock in this part of Greensboro. If we do not go to bat right now for needed improvements, they will be ignored until it is too late.

Mr. Westmoreland agreed that the MPO should continue to urge the State to make the needed improvements. This is an example of a complex project with numerous impacts on the surrounding roadway system. A more comprehensive view of the impacts on this system of removing the Market Street Interchange is needed.

The state's traffic forecast showing a 60 percent decrease in traffic from 1999 to 2025 on Market Street is clearly problematic. The current traffic counts appear a more reliable indicator of likely future conditions. Though Market Street volumes may drop initially with the opening of the Western Urban Loop in 2005, it appears likely that by 2025 those numbers would equalize back to or exceed the levels that they were before the loop opened to traffic.

Mr. Perkins said that the mitigation request should include widening Stagecoach Trail and Chimney Rock Road from the existing two-lane facilities to five-lanes to keep traffic from backing up off Market Street to the Friendly Avenue Interchange. He saw a significant problem in the north-south traffic flow between Friendly and Market-- two major thoroughfares with limited north-south connections in that area.

Mr. Landreth moved approval by the TAC of the following resolution. The motion was seconded by Mr. Holliday.

Mr. Perkins said he would like to add to the resolution improvements to Stagecoach Trail and Chimney Rock Road. Mr. Landreth stated that he would second that.

Mr. Westmoreland said he felt the way to do that would be to ask DOT to look at those areas collectively for improvements from the standpoint that we not only identified Stagecoach Trail and Chimney Rock Road as a potential need, but also Market Street.

Mr. Perkins said either traffic needed to be moved up to Friendly Avenue somehow or moved back down to Guilford College Road or Gallimore Dairy Road. He felt the only choice was to try to build the Friendly Avenue Interchange at a sufficient size to handle the expected traffic volumes and try to pull traffic north from West Market to Friendly.

Mr. Holliday stated that Tom Martin, Planning Director, should be kept up-to-date on this for Comprehensive Planning. He said he could see tremendous impacts in land use along Friendly Avenue as a result of this.

Chairwoman Carmany said there was an amendment by Mr. Perkins to amend the list of mitigation needs. Mr. Landreth seconded the motion to add the amendment to the resolution. The addition of the amendment was approved by unanimous vote.

The TAC then voted unanimously to approve the resolution with the addition of studying improvement needs on Stagecoach Trail, Chimney Rock Road, and West Market Street

Draft Metropolitan TIP FY 2002-2008: Schedule and Project Status

Mr. Meyer said he would talk about the process for developing the MTIP as well as the status of the major projects. Two handouts were distributed: a list of major project changes and a letter from NCDOT regarding the Division Public Meetings.

The MTIP is important because even though the MPO works closely with the State to develop it, and even though it includes the projects that the State indicates can be funded, the MTIP is technically the official program for the MPO area. This MTIP is to be incorporated directly or by reference into the State Transportation Improvement Program.

This MTIP will include a lengthy public review process. It will start with the release of the draft document in November. The draft will include the funding tables supplemented with explanatory information to make the document more user-friendly.

An MPO public meeting is scheduled for November 20th at the Greensboro Public Library in the Nussbaum Room from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. The first half-hour will give everyone an opportunity to look at the displays and talk to the staff. The second half-hour or so will include presentations and the opportunity for comments and questions. On November 28th, the State Division 7 TIP meeting is being held at Bur-Mill Park from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. Chairwoman Carmany will attend to give the MPO's perspective to the Board Member and the Division Engineer, as well as share any public comments received at the meeting the week before regarding the TIP.

Following that, an MPO Review Session will be held in December to provide the opportunity for some of the TAC members to meet with the Board member and Senior Programming Staff of NCDOT.

Mr. Westmoreland said the MPO priority needs had been discussed in a similar meeting in January 2000. This meeting will be to talk about the Draft TIP and any MPO concerns regarding projects and schedules.

Mr. Meyer said a revised version of the MTIP with additional information and any project changes is expected to be released in January, and will be documents available for public review until the MTIP is adopted in early Spring.

The adoption of the document is currently scheduled for March. It will be accompanied by a new Air Quality Conformity Finding. That basically will say that the required Air Quality Analysis has been conducted by the State-wide Planning Branch, and that the MTIP complies with state and federal air quality standards

The State will adopt the State Transportation Improvement Program, including this MTIP, in July. The program will go into effect in October 1, 2001, the first day of federal fiscal year 2002.

Mr. Meyer then moved to the projects, and showed slides.

Bridford Parkway Extension: No. 1 priority. Extend to Guilford College Road by Big Tree Way. Right-of-way acquisition to begin fiscal year 2003, construction to start 2007, open to traffic in 2008, 2009. Will bypass the Wendover Avenue and Guilford College Road Corridors to provide needed congestion relief.

Gallimore Dairy Road Widening: No. 2 priority. Widen roadway between NC 68 south of I-40 to Market Street. Right-of-way to begin in 2006, construction in 2008. Includes the section between International Drive and Market Street. With the current schedule, between 2002 and 2009 or 2010 there will be a two-lane bottleneck there following the I-40 interchange opening in 2002.

The State has included in the I-40 widening project moneys to fund and construct a signal system expansion to allow Greensboro and High Point to coordinate their signal systems in the NC 68 area.

Greensboro Western Urban Loop: Project has been accelerated. I-40 to Bryan Boulevard portion already funded and set for construction 2002. Doug Galyon has often noted that the I-85 to I-40 portion will be a critical link. This section is being accelerated with construction beginning in 2005, finishing in 2009, 2010. Bryan Boulevard to Lawndale portion has been accelerated into the TIP, construction start 2007, ending 2010. Entire Western Loop to open between 2012 and 2014.

Guilford College Road Widening: No. 4 priority. Funding needs to be accelerated. Section to north and new location section south to High Point Road will open before this project is started. This would mean two-lane bottleneck in between. Accelerated from 2005 to 2004. Environmental analysis not finished until 2001-2002. MacKay Road to High Point will start in 2001 just before this widening.

Market Street Widening: No. 3 priority. NC 68 to Colfax. Funding established for right-of-way, 2005; construction, 2008. NCDOT is currently adding a continuous center turn lane there

between NC 68 and Sandy Ridge Road. City identified Bond project to add two additional through lanes onto that section. This may free up NCDOT resources to be used elsewhere in the system and enable the project to be further accelerated.

US 421 Interchanges: No. 5 priority. Dangerous intersections to be replaced with grade separations. Woody Mill Road to the north will be an interchange with right-of-way established 2006, construction 2008. Neely Road may be an interchange or an overpass, right-of-way established 2006, construction after 2008. In response to a question by Chairwoman Carmany, Mr. Ayers responded that Pleasant Garden wants an overpass rather than an interchange at Neely Road.

High Point Road Widening and Relocation: Hilltop to the new US 311 Bypass; eight mile project; six miles new roadway; two miles widening. Configuration not clear, under environmental process, though limited access on new alignment section is anticipated. Phase 1, from US 311 to Manor Road, construction delayed from 2003 to 2006, environmental document needed. Phase 2, Manor Road to Hilltop Road, had been post-year project; construction 2007, 2010. Major project; approximately \$67 million.

It was pointed out that one reason for the high cost was the necessity of relocating High Point Road on the back side of the old JP property because of environmental and historic property concerns. A second factor is the Jamestown bypass will go to all new alignments which was very fairly expensive in acquiring the right-of-way, etc.

Bryan Boulevard Relocation: Take from new interchange at Old Oak Ridge Road and relocate out of the way of the new runway. Will construct the new alignment to the north and bring back close to interchange with NC 68. Just a scope change, no schedule change. Construction, 2001-2003, completion 2005 in time for runway to open.

Mr. Holliday asked how the airport would be accessed from Bryan Blvd. and would there be another airport accessible road from here to the airport. It was explained that the preferred alternative in the Draft EIS still showed pavement going into the airport. It is cut off at the point where the current bridge goes over 68. An interchange will be added to serve the airport at Old Oak Ridge. The next meeting will include a map showing ingress and egress from airport, and how it would be accessed from this area.

NC 68 at Triad Center Drive Relocation: New project added to TIP. Was not on MPO priority needs, but will improve access to Triad Center Drive and reduce NC 68 delays. \$8 million. Replace current signalized intersection with an interchange. Construction, 2007.

Mr. Holliday asked if the east side of NC 68 would be dealt with at the same time, or would that continue to be restricted access. It was explained that you would then jump across and make the east side more accessible. DOT was doing this to help resolve current litigation that they have with the property owners to the east in trying to create an access point for them. They had initially tried to buy out the access rights there, but that did not happen. This was the option to work with the property owners.

Another development opportunity will be created between Regional Road and NC 68, since there is quite a bit of land there. Past proposals have had that developing out as about an 800,000

square foot office complex or industrial complex. Mr. Walston stated that there are negotiations going on with Norfolk Southern Railway, the owners of that 170-acre property.

Sandy Ridge Road Connector: No. 6 priority. State feasibility study scheduled, started fiscal year 2002. Study roadway connector aligning Sandy Ridge Road and Pleasant Ridge Road. Airport Area Transportation Study evaluating location and hopefully can help before feasibility study is begun to identify what alignments need to be looked at. High Point is very interested in this project.

The question was raised if they would consider the alternate route proposed in the past, which was to connect Market Street at Sandy Ridge Road and loop it around and connect it back to Pleasant Ridge Road and back over to Airport Parkway. Mr. Meyer said this was just a limited section and the scope is not set for studies. There will be an opportunity for the City to work with the State to determine exactly what needs to be studied. Mr. Meyer said they would also try to give the Committee some additional information about the Airport Area Transportation Planning Study and some of the things being considered from that perspective.

US 220 - NC 68 Connector: Runs from Rockingham County over to NC 68. Section on existing US 220 on schedule, construction 2002, ending 2004. Will upgrade existing US 220 to Interstate standards, with a few exceptions to be updated in future. New section, connector, would begin just south of Haw River and go to NC 68. No funding attached. Right-of-way moved to 2008. Will be limited access freeway built to Interstate standards.

US 220/Future I-73 Feasibility Study: Study upgrading US 220 from I-85 to Asheboro. Feasibility study scheduled.

Multi-Modal Transportation Center Phase 2: Rail improvements. Necessary to bring AMTRAK station up to multi-modal transportation center. Track improvements and some station work. Draft TIP schedules construction funds for 2004-2005. Hopefully this can be accelerated in future.

Safety Projects - Hicone Road/Hines Chapel: Unsignalized, high accident location. Traffic signal to be installed.

Safety Projects - NC 62 at Racine Road: Signalized installation project.

Safety Projects - Lee Street Interchange: Involves upgrading signage as well as lighting.

Safety Projects - US 29 at McKnight Mill Road: Build pedestrian Bridge. Problem location for pedestrians crossing the freeway; serious accidents have occurred. Construction, 2002.

Mr. Holliday suggested that the pedestrian bridge be done in a quality manner so the neighbors feel good about it.

There has been an ongoing problem at this location with pedestrian crossings. The fences and other barriers used in the past have been ineffective. Many accidents and injuries have happened here. We need to find more ways to connect communities with pedestrian travel.

Bicentennial Trail: Guilford County submitted an enhancement application to fund the portion from Gallimore Dairy up across I-40 on the Chimney Rock relocation; picks up again at Burnt Poplar Road to Swing Road to Market Street. Will be on existing roadways and involve sidewalk improvements. Had been identified as an MPO priority also. County requested \$1.4 million for project; received about \$750,000. County identified matching funds from Park & Recreation bonds. Fifth largest enhancement grant awarded this year statewide.

OTHER ITEMS

Town Reports

None.

Division Engineer's Update

None.

Regional Update

Mr. Westmoreland said that an Open House is planned for November 13th at the Central Library from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Information will be provided about both of the PART rail studies that are currently under way. One is the Intercity Rail Study which looks at the possibility of connections from Raleigh to Asheville through Greensboro to Winston-Salem. The second is the Regional mobility MIS study which is the one which looks at different alternatives in transportation and travel between Greensboro/High Point/Winston-Salem. He encouraged all members to come by and get some information on November the 13th.

Staff Information Items

Mr. Westmoreland said there was a lot going on now and he hoped that in future meetings to talk about several significant points. First of all the Airport Area is certainly a significant point of interest to everyone and they will have a couple of presentations at the next meeting.

Chairwoman Carmany said the next meeting would be held on Wednesday, December 13, 2000, at 10:00 a.m.

Mr. Holliday said that in this morning's newspaper, there was a letter to the editor regarding the intersection of Cridland and Wendover and the signalization at that location. Mr. Westmoreland said he felt this was an unfortunate situation, because even at signalized intersections, there are traffic accidents. Typically when you have an accident at a signalized intersection, it will be serious and someone will be injured. What the writer specifically was referring to, in his opinion, was the request to GDOT to look at the possibility of adding a protected left-turn phase or phases in a couple of locations off of Wendover Avenue. Mr. Fischer and his staff are investigating this. The typical process is to analyze traffic flows to determine if a protected left-turn phase is needed.

Chairwoman Carmany said she attended the Bond Committee meeting this morning. She felt good about the Transportation Bonds, but they do not have their own little group out there really advocating because city staff is prohibited from doing so because of the bond laws, etc. There will be a rally and information session Sunday afternoon at the Depot and at the Public Library.

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There being no further business, the TAC adjourned at 12:06 p.m.